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## WAR CABINET.

### FUTURE POLICY IN PALESTINE.

#### MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

IN the course of the discussion in the Cabinet on the 25th January of the Palestine Committee's plan for the partition of Palestine (W.M. (44), 11th Conclusions, Minute 4), I said that I wished to reserve my final judgment as regards the scheme as a whole, pending the result of the private reference which I had made to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Cairo and Bagdad.

2. I now circulate to my colleagues herewith, the text of my letters to Lord Killearn and Sir K. Cornwallis, together with their replies.

A. E.

*Foreign Office, 15th May, 1944.*

#### ANNEX.

(1)

*Letter from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Cairo and Bagdad.*

*Foreign Office, 1st February, 1944.*

I enclose, for your own personal consideration, a copy of the Report of the Cabinet Committee which was recently set up to consider a long-term policy for Palestine. This Report should not be shown to any member of your staff, nor to anyone else, without express authority from me. The Report will be considered by the Cabinet after the Prime Minister's return to London, and I should like, before the Cabinet takes any final decision, to have your views on certain points arising out of it, and on the general effect which the policy therein recommended is likely to have on our future relations with the Arab world outside Palestine/Iraq.

You will see that the Cabinet Committee have unanimously recommended the adoption of a long-term policy based on partition; that the Committee have, with expert assistance from MacMichael and officials of the Palestine Government, recommended a definite scheme of partition which is practically a variant of the scheme recommended in the 1937 Peel Commission's Report (but that one member of the Committee dissented from the detailed scheme advocated by his colleagues, as being in his opinion unjust to the Arabs); and finally, that the Committee hoped that Arab opposition might be largely counteracted if the partition of Palestine could be linked with a wider scheme for a "Greater Syria," although the Committee favour proceeding with partition in any case, whether or not "Greater Syria" proves to be feasible.

You may possibly be surprised that the Committee, in the light of their knowledge of the past history of Palestine, should have recommended a return to the Peel Commission's policy of partition, which was responsible for so much

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Arab opposition and bloodshed in the years before the war. I must therefore try to give you some explanation of the reasons which have led them to this conclusion. The Committee realise that the announcement of this new policy is certain to arouse an outcry from the Arabs (as well as a similar outcry from the Zionists). The Committee realise also the essential importance, in British interests, of maintaining tranquillity throughout the Middle East, and (to put it at its lowest) of doing nothing which might endanger our oil supplies. Moreover, as the Committee's report points out, partition may mean local riots and disturbances in Palestine, and in the view of the Foreign Office there is the further danger that rioting and further bloodshed in Palestine may spread all over the Middle East, and thus involve His Majesty's Government in an indefinite military commitment, as well as prejudicing their oil interests and all their other interests throughout the whole area. I set out these points in full, because I would not wish you to suppose that they have been overlooked here.

Why then, you may ask, in spite of all these grave objections, have the Committee deliberately come down in favour of partition? I will try to explain the position as I see it. In the first place, whatever the merits or demerits of the Palestine White Paper of 1939, we must face the fact that it will almost certainly be politically impossible to hold to the "White Paper policy" after the war. Many members of the present Government, including the Prime Minister and several members of the Palestine Committee, voted against the White Paper in 1939, and are definitely committed to oppose a policy which, if it could be strictly enforced, would leave the Jews as a permanent minority in Palestine. These Ministers would not feel able, in the light of their past records and of their present sincerely-held convictions, to defend in Parliament the implementation of the White Paper which they feel is fundamentally unjust to the Jews. Nor is the question one which can be shelved indefinitely. Sooner or later, the 75,000 Jewish immigrants allowed by the White Paper will have entered Palestine, and His Majesty's Government will then have to decide whether there is to be any future Jewish immigration or not. There can be little doubt what the present Cabinet's decision would be. Ministers would be all the more reluctant to close the doors of Palestine to future Jewish immigration, because such a decision would be bound to have an unfavourable reception in America. In Palestine the announcement of a decision to carry through the White Paper policy would cause violent reactions from the Jews, in fact there would very probably be an armed Jewish rising, which in turn would produce an extremely awkward Parliamentary situation in this country. To avoid such a situation (and, I must repeat, in accordance with the strong personal convictions of individual members of the present Government) the Cabinet would almost certainly take a decision authorising further Jewish immigration, and scrapping the White Paper altogether.

The question that faced the Committee, therefore, was not whether the White Paper should be implemented or should not be implemented. The White Paper can be regarded as more or less dead. The question was rather whether or not we must return to the old pernicious system whereby His Majesty's Government, as the Mandatory authority, are responsible for allowing further Jewish immigration to an extent only limited by the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine. This means, as we know only too well, ceaseless Zionist pressure on His Majesty's Government in favour of larger quotas, as well as Arab pressure on His Majesty's Government against any quotas at all. It seemed to the Committee that partition, even though not an ideal solution, was at least better than this alternative. Under partition, the burden of responsibility for decisions regarding future Jewish immigration would, of course, rest with the Jews themselves.

Moreover, the Committee felt that the sufferings of Jews in Europe and elsewhere during the past few years have, if anything, strengthened the case for establishing a Jewish State somewhere in the world in order that the Jews, like most other peoples, shall have a State of their own and, if they so wish, a nationality of their own. Whether this would be in the true interests of world Jewry is perhaps a debatable question. But if there is to be such a Jewish State, it could hardly be elsewhere than in Palestine. This, again, is a strong argument in favour of reverting to a partition plan.

If Jewish immigration must continue, it is certainly arguable that the announcement of the revocation of the immigration clauses of the White Paper would have a far more damaging effect on British prestige in the Middle East and create far more resentment in the Arab world than would the announcement of the partition plan. The latter, if accompanied by an offer to terminate the mandates for Palestine and Transjordan and to facilitate the creation of a

Greater Syria, would be regarded as a new contribution, and the fact that it presented a possibility of finality would at least be in its favour. The revocation of the White Paper, on the other hand, would be considered by the Arabs merely as a gross and heartless breach of faith, leaving finality as far away as ever. The Committee felt that we may be able to put partition through without much more than local and temporary disturbances; but they were convinced that we cannot depart from the provisions of the White Paper, while offering nothing substantial in its place, without setting the whole Middle East in a ferment.

As regards the actual scheme of partition recommended by the Committee, you will see that that recommended by the majority of the Committee provides for a Jewish State which shall include practically the whole of the desirable cultivable land in the country, leaving to the Arabs mainly the hill country and uncultivable areas. The arguments for and against this course, upon which the Committee were not unanimous, are set out in the Report itself, and the minute of dissent annexed to it. I will not attempt to develop these arguments here. I will only mention that the majority of the Committee attached great importance to the fact that the Zionists will be bitterly disappointed at the comparatively small size of the State which it is proposed to award to them, and that nothing much less than this would be regarded as acceptable by even the more moderate Jew. There are, however, two features of the scheme mentioned in the minute of dissent to which I would like to draw your special attention. You will see that one of the disputable points is whether the Huleh Salient in the North-East of the proposed Jewish State should in fact be awarded to the Jewish State, or to the Arabs. Another disputable point is the solution recommended by the Committee for the Negeb in the South.

As for the "Greater Syria" proposal, you should know that the Foreign Office have some doubts whether this will prove to be feasible. We fully appreciate the desirability of giving the Arabs something they want, namely, a "Greater Syria," to counter-balance the ill effects of partition. Much less concern is likely to be shown by the Arabs about the disadvantages to them of partition in Palestine if at the same time they are interested and excited about their own reunification. But we have to remember that the proposal is not likely to be welcomed by the French, who have always been opposed to any idea of "Arab federation." Nor is it at all certain that the Syrian Government themselves would wish to enter into a treaty with us on the basis of recognising the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. Again, we do not quite see how a "Greater Syria" would work out, in which the French would be responsible for defence, European advisers and so forth, in the northern part of the State, including Damascus, whereas the British would be responsible for the same matters in the southern part of the State. If, however, it is possible to overcome these difficulties, so much the better. It would, of course, mean that Transjordan would in future be governed from Damascus, and that the Emir Abdullah, if he is not chosen by the Syrians as their monarch, will have to be retired on a pension.

As soon as you have had time to study these points, I should like your observations on the whole question, particularly with reference to the problem of our future relations with the Arab world as a whole/Iraq. Your observations will, I hope, cover the following points:—

- (a) Do you agree with the view expressed in paragraph 17 (1) on page 8 of the Report that: "In the neighbouring States, the solution (*i.e.*, the solution recommended by the Committee) will probably not be regarded as so inequitable as to warrant an indefinite prolongation of violent opposition"?
- (b) Do you consider that the opposition of the Arab world would be materially reduced if the Huleh Salient were awarded to the Arabs instead of to the Jews; and, failing the total incorporation of the Huleh Salient in an Arab State, would it make any difference if a corridor five or ten miles wide along the western and northern frontier of the Huleh Salient were awarded to the Arabs in order to provide direct communication between Syria and Galilee?
- (c) Would it make any difference if the Negeb were definitely to be promised to the Arabs as soon as its agricultural possibilities had been surveyed and agreement reached on the terms of its economic exploitation, if desired, by a Jewish chartered company?
- (d) Do you agree that the "Greater Syria" proposal, if feasible, would greatly diminish Arab opposition as a whole? Do you consider it likely to be feasible and what do you think will happen in the Arab



world as a whole if the "Greater Syria" scheme has to be abandoned, and the partition plan is put into force without it?

- (e) It is, of course, easy to criticise the Committee's scheme, or any other scheme for a solution of the Palestine problem. But have you any better suggestions, apart from the indefinite continuance of the White Paper policy, which must be ruled out for the reasons given above?

The above has been written, and indeed, the whole work of the Committee has been carried out, on the basis of a choice between the continuance of the White Paper (or its abandonment without putting anything in its place) and a return to the policy of partition. In so far as any third alternative may be said to exist, it would perhaps have to be sought in certain ideas reported to be in the mind of President Roosevelt, who, after Colonel Hoskins, his Special Emissary to Ibn Saud, had reported the complete refusal of that Monarch to concur in any handing over of Palestine to the Jews, has switched to a new line of approach outlined in the following paragraph, which summarises a conversation between the President and Colonel Hoskins in November last:—

"As to a solution of the Palestine problem, the President stated that his own thinking leaned toward a wider use of the idea of trusteeship for Palestine—of making Palestine a real Holy Land for all three religions, with a Jew, a Christian, and Moslem as the three responsible trustees. He said he realised it might be difficult to get the agreement of the Jews to such a plan, but if Moslems and Christians of the world were agreed he hoped the Jews could also be persuaded. This concept to be successful would, he also realised, have to be presented as a solution larger and more inclusive than the establishment of an Arab State or a Jewish State. He realised that this idea, of course, required further thought and needed to be worked out in greater detail, but at least that was the line along which his mind was running."

The basic idea contained in the above has been worked out tentatively and without authority in the State Department in Washington on the lines of a permanent Trustee State administered by a High Commissioner responsible to the United Nations and guided by a Council representing Christians, Moslems and Jews. Jewish immigration into Palestine would be continued, but would be kept within some fixed relationship to the size of the Arab population. The essence of this plan is the assumption that Arab hostility towards continued Jewish immigration would be diminished once the nature of the new political régime had been established as definitive so that the Arabs no longer had reason to fear that continued Jewish immigration was intended to pave the way for Jewish political domination.

I need only add that the Committee's scheme is known to Casey, Moyne and MacMichael, who are in general agreement with it, on the assumption that at least two divisions of British troops are in or close to Palestine when the announcement is eventually made. There would, of course, be no objection if you wished to concert your reply with Cornwallis/Killearn, to whom I am sending a similar letter, and, should you so desire, with MacMichael too, to whom you may, if you wish, show this letter.

Yours sincerely,  
ANTHONY EDEN.

P.S.—I enclose a supplement to the Committee's report, which gives further details about the Huleh Salient corridor mentioned in (b) on the preceding page.

(2)

*Letter from His Majesty's Ambassador, Cairo, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.*

*Cairo, 16th February, 1944.*

I received your Most Secret letter of the 1st February on the 9th February and, in accordance with your directions have neither shown nor revealed it to anyone, including those senior members of my staff whom I should normally have consulted.

You request my observations on the whole problem covered by your letter and its enclosures and especially that I will cover in my reply certain points itemised in your letter from (a) to (e).

I will answer those itemised points one by one, but first I would preface my answers with one general observation. You record that "the White Paper can be regarded as more or less dead." I submit that, in the event of the present partition proposals going through, the fundamental provision in the Balfour Declaration can be regarded as equally dead which runs "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine." I should imagine that this disregard of the Balfour terms as regards non-Jews would arouse much bitterness and condemnation. The point may have some material importance when it comes to Parliamentary and public debate.

I now turn to your itemised points:—

- (a) I do not agree with the passage quoted from the Report. On the contrary here in Egypt (about which alone I can speak with any authority) there will be prolonged and most bitter opposition. How violent or enduring no one can foretell: but we shall without question be held guilty of bad faith; and that stigma will remain. Remember that King F. and the Egyptian Government are committed to and at present engaged upon a policy of Pan-Arabism; that Egypt aims at the leadership of the Arab States; that the handing over of any part of Palestine to an independent Jewish State will be regarded as torpedoing that policy and a violation of our pledges; both racially and *religiously* the reaction to any form of partition will be immediate, violent and deep-rooted.
- (b) I do not believe that the inclusion in or exclusion from the new Arab State of the Huleh Salient will materially affect or mitigate the adverse reaction of the local Arabs or of the Arab world. Arab opinion will damn partition, regardless of the detail. If, none the less, partition is decided upon, despite its recognised dangers, I should personally advocate Huleh going to the Arabs, (1) on grounds of equity, (2) because it will avoid separation of Galilee from the rest of the Arab territory. Corridors, so far as I know, have never been successful devices.
- (c) I do not believe the promise or assignment of the Negeb to the Arabs would decrease Arab resentment of partition. I surmise the Arabs (who know all about the area) would be tempted to regard it in the nature of a "bad joke."
- (d) I do not believe the bait of "Greater Syria" (and I share the Foreign Office doubt as to its practicability) will diminish opposition to partition. The Arabs will continue to maintain that part of *their* land (and admittedly far the best part) has been taken from them and handed to others. If partition is enforced, whether with or without "Greater Syria," there will be grave trouble ahead throughout the whole Middle East. In Egypt, a serious reaction upon relations and charges of bad faith: in the Arab States possibilities of bloodshed with in any case repercussions upon our relations with each of them individually and together corporately—Saudi Arabia, Irak, Syria, the Lebanon—compare what happened to the French over the Lebanon recently. I should expect *religious* reaction as far off as India and Northern Africa: indeed throughout the Moslem world. The Cabinet Committee do not seem to have touched on that—the religious aspect.
- (e) As you very truly say, it is very easy to criticise. But I take it you want my honest opinion without equivocation: in my replies given above, to your various questions, I disclaim all intent of destructive criticism.

Now let me turn to your enquiry whether I have any "better suggestions." Here are certain thoughts that have passed through my mind both before and after reading your letter and the attached papers. First and foremost I had most earnestly hoped that the problem of Palestine's future could have been left over until after the war. If we want, as we surely must, to avoid general unsettlement in the whole of the Middle East (and possibly further afield) is it really necessary to awaken the question now? Is it not infinitely wiser to leave things as they are, even if a certain amount of increased Jewish immigration may have meantime to be arranged somehow?

Quite apart from this question of the inopportuneness of the immediate moment, I have for long felt that were I a dictator I should (after the war) tackle Palestine along different lines to any (so far as I know) hitherto explored. Why not approach the question on a basis of Imperial Defence and Strategy? Palestine affects two vitally important defence aspects—(1) communications, (2) oil—and I should have surmised that we should not welcome an independent, most probably highly efficient, and possibly aggressive Jewish State cutting right across both those interests. Any more than Egypt will with Sinai and the Exodus in their minds). On this basis of Defence interest, my thought would be (always post-war) to scrap the Mandate and the White Paper: and come out boldly with a decision to keep Palestine ourselves as a vital link in our Defence system. What precise form our continued occupation should take would have to be considered in detail: but our physical control should be definite and unlimited. We would tell both Arab and Jew that we were staying and why: and add that we should see to it that both races were fairly treated and their interests adequately protected so far as compatible with *our* predominant (defence) interest. Both sides would squeal: but I surmise that they would both eventually submit to *force majeure*, backed, as it would be, by valid strategical reasons and adequate force.

Let me add that my approach to this problem is and has always been from the purely British angle; what is best to our, British, interest. The Balfour Declaration has from the start been a millstone round our necks: it contains an unworkable contradiction in terms.

I do not myself see that partition need necessarily be the *only* answer; doubtless we can and will enforce it if such be the final decision. If we do, I agree with the Committee that we may expect violence—and must provide for the permanent retention of adequate force available (where?) for future outbreaks.

To sum up, if partition is to be our policy despite its recognised dangers, the detail doesn't seem to me to matter much, though the points made in the Minister of State's Minority Report seem to me well taken and convincing. But I feel strongly we should be under no illusion that its execution will not involve us in grave difficulties and odium the ultimate effect of which upon our position in this area I should hesitate to predict.

Yours sincerely,  
KILLEARN.

P.S.—I have taken advantage of your permission and have sent Cornwallis a copy of this letter.

K.

(3)

*Letter from His Majesty's Ambassador, Bagdad, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.*

*Baghdad, 24th February, 1944.*

I thank you for your letter of the 1st February. In accordance with your instructions, I have not shown it to anyone or discussed its contents.

2. You ask for my observations on the whole question raised in your letter, with particular reference to the problem of our future relations with Iraq, and for my views on certain specific points.

3. I have carefully studied the Report of the Cabinet Committee which was enclosed with your letter. It is not within my competence to offer any detailed comments on it, though I was impressed by the points raised in the Minister of State's minority report. I note MacMichael's opinion that there will be no serious disorder at the time the announcement is made, provided that at least two divisions of British troops are in or near the country. The Palestine Arabs are disunited and without a leader at the present time, and one would not anticipate organised resistance at first. It must, however, be remembered that Arab risings in the past have generally taken some time to mature, and that the Arabs are adepts at choosing their opportunity. It will be unwise to assume that they



will be overawed by the fact that we are "on the crest of the wave of victory," as the Report puts it. We were in that pleasant position in 1918, but, nevertheless, within the following few years we had serious trouble in Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Syria. The fact that the chief interest of our troops will be to get home as soon as possible after the main hostilities cease is well known to the Arabs, so it may well happen that they will wait until our seasoned troops are replaced by units which are less experienced before attempting a rising on a large scale. You will remember that this is what happened in Iraq in 1920.

4. For these reasons, I would agree that the first step—the announcement of the partition policy—is unlikely to produce immediate violent reaction on a large scale in Palestine, provided that we show sufficient force. The implementation of the policy, however, and its after-effects give cause for very serious anxiety. The Jews will be given a tiny country, and it seems to an outsider that if they are to make anything of it and satisfy the insistent demand for immigration, they will have to buy the Arabs out or, if that proves impossible, get rid of them in some other way. That would be only natural. His Majesty's Government, on the other hand, in fulfilment of the second half of the Balfour Declaration, will be bound to try and safeguard the rights of the Arabs. The struggle is bound to be protracted and painful. One must expect the strongest opposition from the Arabs within the Jewish State, and the constant occurrence of incidents which will keep the Moslem world inflamed. The Jewish State will become the *terra irredenta* of the Arabs—to be recovered when a favourable moment comes.

#### *Effect of Partition on our Relations with Iraq.*

5. I would first like to say that, especially during the last year, there has grown up a more genuine feeling of friendship here than I have known before. It began soon after the disappearance of Rashid Ali. His revolt came as a shock to most Iraqis and forced them to realise how near to disaster he had brought their country. The restoration of the Regent and his Government and, above all, the generous policy of His Majesty's Government, made a deep and universal impression. This impression has been greatly strengthened by the Atlantic Charter and other pronouncements of the aims for which the United Nations are fighting. The Iraqis, like the rest of the Middle Eastern Arabs, have come to believe that His Majesty's Government have their interests at heart and have accordingly given them real co-operation. Their confidence was clearly shown during the recent troubles in the Lebanon, when from the beginning there was an implicit faith that we would solve them.

6. The Iraqis have, however, for many years taken the keenest interest in Palestine, and unrest there has been instantly reflected here. This interest may be inflamed in times of trouble by local extremist politicians, but it is not their creation; it touches every Moslem home in the country. People in England are far too prone to ignore its strength and importance.

7. The Iraqis up to the present have the same faith in our intention to implement the White Paper of 1939 as they had in our ability to restrain the French in the Lebanon, and for that reason rumours of Zionist activities have caused no acute anxiety. They do not think that the White Paper satisfies Arab rights, but they are willing to regard it as a reasonable settlement in the circumstances. Its abrogation or, indeed, any material whittling down of it would come as a great shock and would be regarded as a gross breach of faith. Still more, I believe, would the setting up of a Jewish State—whether of the whole of Palestine or a part is only a question of degree—be held a betrayal. They would think we have been cheating them all this time and that we have obtained their co-operation under false pretences. Their confidence in us would be destroyed and friendship, so slowly gained, turned again into distrust. This change would come reluctantly, since the majority of Iraqis genuinely want to remain our friends, and they would hope at first that the decision was not final. Its pace would depend, I think, to a large degree on the reactions of the Palestinian Arabs. If the latter were to keep quiet at first, I would anticipate protests and appeals by responsible elements in this country and, when hope was abandoned, an intense indignation, the rapid rise to influence of hostile extremist elements, and the standing aloof in disillusion of those who have been our best supporters. If there were riots in Palestine, I would expect hostile demonstrations here and attempts to attack the Jews and possibly individual British subjects. The lower-class populations of Baghdad, Mosul and Basrah are notoriously vicious, and the extent of the damage they would do would depend on the strength and disposition of the Government in power. I would expect the minimum of co-operation from the Government and a cessation of the friendly associations which exist at present. Disorders would be likely to increase as refugees found their way here from Palestine. It is early yet

to say whether extra troops would be needed to protect our communications, oil and other interests.

8. Should a full-scale rebellion break out in Palestine, the Arab countries would no doubt consult each other. I would not expect them to join in while our forces are still mobilised, but they would help surreptitiously with money, arms or volunteers. They would be as unaccommodating as they dared, and effective co-operation would cease.

9. At the end of the war in the Far East, our army would presumably be due to go home and leave the protection of our interests to the Royal Air Force at Habbaniyah. Whether the latter would be sufficient is a matter on which no useful opinion would be expressed. At the least, I fear that Iraq would have to be permanently erased from the list of the countries in which we have friendly influence, and the maintenance of our oil and other interests would be precarious.

*Effect on the Neighbouring Arab Countries and on the Moslem World.*

10. I note that the Committee have endeavoured to predict the reactions of the Arabs in neighbouring Arab countries to partition, but that no consideration appears to have been paid to the question of its effect on the Moslem world as a whole. May I venture to suggest that this should be done. Owing to its historical and religious associations, Palestine has, with the Hejas, a special place in the hearts of all Moslems, and I feel that the grant of part of the country to the Jews, who have for so many centuries occupied a position of inferiority in the East, will shock them profoundly. I do not believe they will ever acquiesce in such a decision. In particular I hope the probable reaction of the Moslems in India will be examined.

11. As regards the countries of the Middle East, I would expect their reactions to be much the same as those of Iraq—our relations would, I think, be permanently impaired and our interests imperilled.

*Arab Federation and Partition.*

12. In my despatch No. 282 of the 4th October, 1941, I remarked that the underlying motive of Arab federation is in its essence anti-foreign, because it is inspired by a wish to form a block of Arab States strong enough to secure Arab aims in Palestine and Syria, to strengthen the independence of all the Arab countries and to present a united front to foreign Powers, especially Great Britain and France. I also expressed the opinion that Arab federation was not against our interests so long as our policy marched with that of the Arabs, and that in any case we should not attempt to stem a current which was bound to grow stronger as time went on. The policy of His Majesty's Government towards the Arabs during this war has been extremely wise, and the Arab leaders have gone quietly along, maturing their plans. The Arab public have taken a benevolent but not an enthusiastic interest in the matter and, while some useful agreements may be made on economic and cultural matters, federation on the political side still seems in present circumstances far distant. The only sign of it so far is Nuri Pasha's statement that Iraq and Syria have agreed privately to have the same foreign and defence policy, and that the Amir Abdullah wishes to join them. He has volunteered this information and so far there is nothing sinister in the plan.

13. We have, however, had a useful object-lesson recently in the Lebanese disorders, and the unanimity with which all Arab States raised their voices in protest should be taken as a warning. There is no doubt in my own mind that, if the partition scheme is put into force, all the Arab States will be drawn closer, and the political federation which would in normal conditions be of such slow growth will be rapidly developed to the danger of our position in the Middle East.

*The Formation of a Greater Syria as a Palliative.*

14. I do not believe that the offer to create a Greater Syria, in the manner proposed, would soften the blow, for the gift offered is far less than what the Arabs expect. Ever since you gave your blessing to "any movement among the Arabs to promote economic, cultural or political unity," the Arab leaders, in this country at any rate, have assumed that they are at liberty to go ahead and that any arrangement which they may make, provided that it is not contrary to Allied interests or in conflict with the White Paper of 1939, will meet with sympathy. They gave great importance to your announcement, and in order that there should be no suspicion or misunderstandings they have been careful to keep us informed of what they were doing, and we have been taken into the confidence of Ibn Saud, Nahas Pasha, Nuri Pasha and others. We



have from time to time advised them to take no hasty action, but we have never, so far as I remember, criticised their proposals in any way. Nuri Pasha's plans for a Greater Syria, which have been discussed with other Arab Governments, have been received without comment by His Majesty's Government, and it is not unnatural that he should assume that no fundamental objection exists to their adoption. Both he and other Iraqis feel that they have been given a fair wind and I have little doubt that the same feeling exists in other Arab countries.

15. In these circumstances, I cannot think that the Committee's offer—so far less comprehensive than what the Arab leaders themselves have in mind—will gild the partition pill. An offer of this sort will certainly not be considered as a new development, since the Arab leaders have for many months been consulting on the assumption that something of the sort will come about, though whether there should be an association of Levant States within their present frontiers or a Greater Syria as proposed by Nuri Pasha appears to be still undecided in their minds. Nuri Pasha is now inclined to favour the former, as he does not think that the Arabs of Palestine would wish to be incorporated with Syria. Being out of touch with the local situation, I am unable to give a useful opinion regarding the feasibility of the Greater Syria proposal on other counts. I should, however, be extremely surprised if the Syrian Government were to agree to enter into a treaty with us on the basis of recognising the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

16. As regards the proposed division of the area into British and French spheres of influence, a recent remark of Nuri Pasha to me that the Syrian leaders have told him that they will never sign a treaty with the French may be of interest. Although I do not think that the proposal of the Committee will diminish Arab opposition to the partition scheme, a deplorable effect would no doubt be caused by the failure to provide adequately for the future of the Arabs who live in the truncated districts of Palestine. I suggest that it would be wise to allow them and the Transjordanians and the Syrians to decide the future composition of the whole area. Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter has been taken at its literal meaning by the Arab world and is regarded as a solemn pledge by the British and American Governments.

#### *The Huleh Salient.*

17. I do not believe that the Arab world will agree to the surrender of any land to the Jews, or that the award of the Huleh Salient to the Arabs would materially reduce their opposition. If, however, the salient is granted to the Jews and the Arabs resist the decision by force, repercussions throughout the Moslem world will be by so much the more serious. Since the population is largely Arab, I would expect a special grievance to be created. The establishment of a corridor between Syria and Galilee would not, in my opinion, placate the Arab world in the least, though it seems a necessity for the local Arabs.

#### *The Negeb.*

18. My remarks above apply also to the Negeb. I venture to suggest that conditional awards always arouse suspicion.

#### *Timing.*

19. If His Majesty's Government finally decide to adopt the partition scheme, I sincerely hope that they will not announce their decision until both Germany and Japan have been defeated. To set the whole of the Middle East in a ferment at a time when our communications and oil are of such vital importance will surely prove a grave embarrassment. In this matter the effect of enemy propaganda on Indian Moslem opinion should not be lost sight of.

#### *President Roosevelt's Idea of a Permanent Trustee State.*

20. If this proposal were put to the Arabs as an alternative to the White Paper, they would, no doubt, reject it; if it were offered as an alternative to partition it would, I think, be preferred, since there would be no fear of Jewish political domination over any part of the country. It would be difficult to persuade the Moslem world to accept the basic idea of the scheme as a permanent settlement; but if that were achieved the readiness with which the Arabs would fall into line would depend largely on the question of representation on the Council and the ratio of Jewish to Arab population. As it is proposed that the High Commissioner should be responsible to the United Nations, I assume that the proposal would be made by the latter. If His Majesty's Government have

finally decided to abrogate the White Paper of 1939, I recommend that this scheme be further examined. It is important, in my view, that any departure from the White Paper should have the open support of the Allies, and particularly of the Americans, Russians and French. If this is not secured, the influence of other Governments—and particularly that of the United States—will rise in the Middle East in proportion as our stock falls.

21. I am sorry that I have no fresh suggestion to offer on this vexed question. It is, as you say, very easy to criticise, but I have assumed that you want my honest opinion, and, in giving it, I fear at inordinate length, I have only stated what I believe will be the result of putting a partition scheme into force. After many years in the East I am neither anti-Zionist nor an Arab enthusiast, and, in saying that I would deplore the abrogation of the White Paper, I am thinking solely of the grave and enduring troubles which I believe will come on us in the future. I am an optimist in most things, and it is with great regret that I am unable to accept the hopeful views of the Cabinet Committee.

22. I am sending a copy of this to Killearn, with whom I have been in touch.

Yours sincerely,

KINAHAN CORNWALLIS.

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